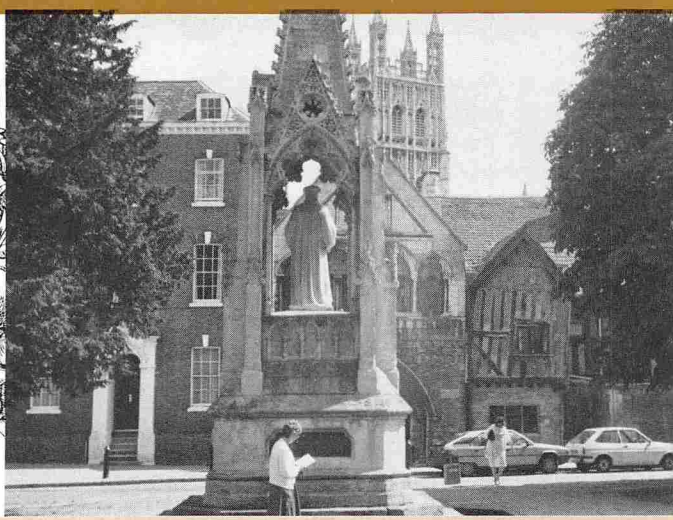
REFORMATION TODAY '87

ord Jesus receive my soul

Woodcut from Foxe's 'Martyrs'



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Bishop John Hooper

The only son of well-to-do parents, John Hooper was born in Somerset in 1495. He studied at Merton College, Oxford, and on leaving in 1519 became a monk of the Cistercian order which stressed poverty (but became very rich), simplicity and solitude. On the dissolution of the monasteries he went first to London and then returned to Oxford. Being a diligent student of the Scriptures, especially of the Pauline letters, Hooper saw the errors of Rome and became an ardent advocate of the Reformation. In 1546 he had to flee to the Continent and at Strasbourg at the age of 51 fell in love with Anna de Tserclas of a noble Flemish family. What followed could make an exciting film for he endured many dangers (bonds, imprisonments, shipwreck) in the following year both in England and Ireland in a mission by which he secured the means to marry Anna. This he did immediately on his return. When King Henry died Hooper returned from Zurich where he had been studying theology under Bullinger.

He promised Bullinger that he would correspond and accurately predicted that he would eventually 'be burned to ashes'. He became bishop of Gloucester in 1551 and proved to be an outstanding pastor. He gave himself tirelessly to the work of the gospel, preaching several times a day. He was an excellent and popular preacher. Dickens, the historian, points to almost superhuman energies by which Hooper went about his work. He sent a questionnaire to the 311 clergy of his diocese asking nine basic questions including the request to repeat the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. 39 did not know the location of the Lord's Prayer, 34 did not know the author of the Lord's Prayer, and eight could not answer any of the nine questions!

When Mary came to the throne in 1553 the first to be arrested were Rogers and Hooper, who suffered intensely by harsh treatment in prison. In February 1555 Hooper was burned at the stake. This protracted an excruciatingly painful death he met firmly and cheerfully. On his way to the stake he reminded those in the large crowd gathered of the reality of eternal life and eternal hell. We need to remember that the central issue for which he was prepared to die, was transubstantiation, in other words the mass, which Hooper called 'the iniquity of the Devil!' Those were times when Christians were Christians because they believed. Ours is the age of assent, of nominal faith, but with the result that so-called Christians are not prepared to contend for truth, only give lip service to it. Hooper could have gone home to his wife and family if he had recanted, but he spurned recantation at the stake and said, 'If you love my soul, away with it!'

The front cover shows the memorial to Hooper on the spot where he was burned. The photo was taken during the Carey family conference reported on page 32. Alongside the photo is part of the woodcut from an early edition of Foxe's Book of Martyrs *the story of which book is referred to on pages 13 and 14.*

Editorial

Whenever the work of preparing an issue of the magazine begins, the problem of balance and proportion looms up. It is the same with preaching. The preacher has to ask himself, Is my preaching too doctrinal? Is my sermon merely a well prepared lecture destitute of application to the conscience and without appeal to the heart? However valuable *information* may be we still have to go beyond that. It is not only the *mind* that hungers for truth, the *heart* desires assurance of the love of God Triune. Then too there is the desire to reciprocate that love and give ourselves to him. All these constitute legitimate needs which require to be met in our preaching and Christian literature.

In order to maintain balance I was going to begin with the subject of the Lordship of Christ and in particular our submission to his Lordship (see details of the cassettes for the Carey Family Conference). However, the pressures of the Ecumenical Movement are such that space has to be devoted to this, and several articles must be held over. Instead of beginning with devotional material we start this time with something practical. Evangelicals are accused of not being interested in social action. In response to that we most heartily affirm our belief in Isaiah 58 and acknowledge that revival in local churches is often connected to compassion for those in need and practical relief of the poor.

Where is the Ecumenical Movement taking us?

During June this year more than 5,000 members representing 100 churches of Wirral (the peninsula opposite Liverpool, bordered by the River Mersey to the north, and the river Dee separating it from Wales to the south), witnessed the signing of a covenant by Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Non-conformist leaders. This took place at the Bebington Oval, the stadium used for the filming of parts of *Chariots of Fire.* Michael Baughen, the bishop of Chester (up to now noted for his evangelical convictions), was one of the leaders in this further advance of the Ecumenical Movement.

A feature of the modern British scene has been the impossibility for men who become bishops in the Church of England to retain their evangelical integrity. The Bishop of Chester justified his compromise by asserting that there was more to unite the churches represented than to divide them. This we would affirm to be absurd. How can we shut our eyes to Liberalism, Syncretism, and the Roman Catholic dogmas and traditions that contradict the Scriptures? Yes, we can attempt unity by closing our eyes to the facts. We can abandon our beliefs but the Lord Jesus Christ does not wish us to.

The unity for which he prayed is of the utmost importance but it is a unity in the Spirit. It is a unity described by Paul in Ephesians 4:4-6. Unity is for those who

believe, not for those who do not believe. It is dishonest as well as unfaithful to Christ, his Word, and the historic Christian Church to be devoid of the courage that is required to insist on basic biblical truths for unity.

Why is it that no clear voice has been raised on Wirral to oppose this false movement? The main reason is that the evangelical churches there are isolated from one another. They do not work together, nor is there any leader who can challenge what is being done. This highlights the fragmented and weak nature of the evangelical churches. Certainly it is not enough to be negative. Nor is anything achieved by throwing rotten tomatoes at those who work for a false unity.

Our aim must be positive. It must be reformation. It must be the quest for true revival. It must be for the unity of Bible believing Christians of all denominations, not over the grave of an abandoned gospel, but on the foundation of justification by faith alone and by grace alone.

A separate printing of the eight page inset, WHERE IS THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT TAKING US? is being printed for distribution among the churches within the area, and the prayers of those who receive *Reformation Today* throughout the world are sought, especially as we contemplate the public meeting on September 29th.

Science and the Age of the Earth

The material by J. G. Vos is urgent in its relevance. It should be read over and over again until its message is thoroughly understood. The question of the authority of science is disturbing Christians everywhere. Recently we heard about a church which has seceded from an association of churches over this very issue. We would like to think that that division can be mended through a careful consideration of what J. G. Vos has written. The matter is not secondary. If we abandon belief in the first Adam how long will it be before we lose hold of the last Adam? It is not simply a matter of Genesis 1 and 2 but also Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. And nor is this all a question of mere interpretation of the days in Genesis 1 and 2, as J. G. Vos shows. The subject is one in which we are obliged to distinguish clearly the difference between natural revelation, that is science, and direct revelation, the Word of God.

CAREY CONFERENCE FOR MINISTERS

LIVERPOOL January 5th-7th 1988

The 1689 Confession and other subjects including the inter-dependency of the churches by David Kingdon.

The Leeds Reformed Baptist Church has taken seriously the injunctions and promise of Isaiah 58:10, 'if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in darkness.' At tremendous cost in terms of time, enterprise, hard work and cash L.R.B.C. has cared for homeless young people. A description of a little of what is involved follows.

Caring for Life

We are probably all familiar with the sight of a little girl tottering around in Mum's high heels, desperately trying to convince herself and others that the shoes fit. If we were to step into the shoes of someone less fortunate than ourselves, even for just a few hours, I wonder how cramped our toes would feel.

Let's imagine you are nineteen years old, though you feel a lot older inside. It is three years now since you left the Children's Home where you were placed, or 'dumped', as you saw it, at the age of thirteen. The hostel you moved on to from there was lonely and the other lads bullied you so severely that it was the happiest day of your life when you heard that the council had actually allocated you a flat of your own. The fact that the flat was in the worst area of the city mattered little to you, and the world at last seemed to be a wonderful place. But not for too long.

'I haven't enough money for food and clothes and cigarettes. I want to go to the pub. I'm so lonely. How can I pay for stupid things like rent and gas? I can't understand the letters anyway.' (You never quite learned to read at school. Your mind was always on more important things, such as how to get out of the way more quickly when Dad lashes out, and who has Mum gone off with this time?) The bills and court summonses build up. The neighbours complain because you've got a dog – your only friend. Every time you pop round to the corner shop some gang breaks into your flat again. There is nothing to steal, so they paint obscenities across the walls. The only clothes you have left are the ones on your back. You go to the Social Security office most days, but you always end up being rude. Why do the people there get so short-tempered, just because you don't understand the forms? Walking out seems the best thing to do, but, of course, no money comes.

The one time you went back to the Children's Home, you were shocked to find an empty building, with a sign outside saying it was due for demolition. The windows were boarded up, so you couldn't even peep into the shell of a building which had been the only place ever to feel in the remotest sense like 'home'.

People pass you in the street with a wide berth, muttering 'smelly tramp', but baths are the last thing on your mind right now.

'Where do I go when they throw me out of the flat tomorrow? They say I owe them £600. At least I'd get fed in prison. I feel poorly. I can't cope. I hate you for this Mum. I'm so lonely. The social workers ruined things, I'm not going to them for help. I'll go and break into somewhere. They'll have to pick me up then.'

These 'shoes' wouldn't fit too comfortably on any of us, yet hundreds, probably thousands, of young people have to live in them, young people of sixteen years and over, scarcely out of childhood, though many of them never had a childhood anyway.

'CARING FOR LIFE' is a Christian Trust set up in 1987 to help young people such as these. Homelessness amongst young people is a far greater problem than most of us would think possible. In Leeds alone, from February to March 1985, over 250 young people were known to be homeless. The figure will inevitably be higher now, and the problem is severe and heart-rending. Many charities and local authorities seek to provide overnight or short-term accommodation, but the young people drift on again, many being totally unable to cope alone.

C.F.L. has begun in a small way, with two homes housing thirteen young people altogether, but we provide twenty-four-hour cover; loving care and supervision by Christian staff both paid and voluntary; the opportunity to hear the gospel, probably for the first time; all the food the young people can eat; good clothing; a private bedroom with keys for each resident; help with reading; training in some sort of job in our workshop, etc., etc., but above all, somewhere which is HOME for as long as the young person wishes. No one need ever move on unless he or she wants to.

The waiting list for admission is endless. Without any advertising, within a few weeks of mentioning to some young people our idea of opening a home, we had over eighty requests for places. We long to expand the work both in Leeds and in other cities, also to help other very needy groups of people. Our aim is to reach hopeless people with Christ's love. Our longing is that many will be saved, and our request of you is that you pray for us. We would value your prayers in these areas:

1 For the young people in our homes, that they will find security and love, and above all that they will be saved.
2 For the staff in our homes, who perform a very hard, wearying, and sometimes thankless task.
3 For opportunities to expand the work, that suitable properties will be found together with sufficient finance.
4 For the witness of the staff working in the Meanwood area in particular, that they will be able to reach out to the very needy community there.

If you feel able to give towards the work of C.F.L. we would greatly value any gift, however small. Spurgeon found that, in the financing of the Stockwell Orphanage, it was the steady flow of small gifts which ensured the continuance of the work. In the reports on the Orphanage for 1885-1886, published in the *Sword and Trowel,* amongst donations listed are:

'A loaf for the orphans – 4d'
'Eskdale shepherd – 10sh'
'Three dear children – 3sh 9d'
'From one whose little ones are all safe in the arms of Jesus – 5sh'

The widow's mite will ensure that our two homes, Carey House and Tindall House, are the first of many homes where deeply deprived young men and women will be reached with the love of someone who will never let them down, our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you would like to receive further information or to contribute towards the work of C.F.L., please write to: Miss J. Hargrave, 'Caring For Life', Crag House Farm, Smithy Lane, Cookridge, LEEDS LS16 7NH, United Kingdom. Tel: Leeds (0532) 679422.

J. G. Vos was a missionary, minister, and editor of Blue Banner Faith and Life. *He edited the works of his father, Geerhardus Vos who was professor of Biblical Theology at Princeton. First published in 1966, this material has been reproduced in American Journals. We are not surprised since it is even more relevant now than when first written.*

Science and the Age of the Earth

J. G. Vos

Scripture and Nature are not Co-ordinate Revelations of God

According to scriptural teaching, natural revelation serves as a *witness* to God. It is chiefly significant for the heathen, who are without the light of Scripture. From natural or general revelation those without the light of Scripture can learn that God exists, that he is very great and that mankind ought to glorify and worship him. Natural revelation also conveys some basic but limited knowledge about morality. 'For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another' (Rom 2:14,15).

While general or natural revelation bears a true though limited witness to God and morality, its effectiveness in this function has been diminished by the fall of the human race into sin. Men 'became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened' (Rom 1:21). The fall of man had a damaging effect both on humanity's moral sense and also on the human intellect. The result is that the revelation of God in nature, including that in human nature or the human consciousness, being apprehended by a darkened mind and corrupted conscience, is inevitably misinterpreted and distorted, so that only very limited and obscured knowledge is derived from it. The religious systems of the heathen world amply demonstrate how far fallen mankind, when without the special revelation of God and without regeneration by the Holy Spirit, inevitably wanders from the pathway of truth and righteousness.

The notion that nature and Scripture are co-ordinate revelations of God, each equally valid and sufficient in its own field, is one of the most harmful errors of our time. Nature, whether internal or external to the human personality, is in no sense co-ordinate with Scripture. Both as *witness* and as *revelation* nature apart from Scripture is inadequate, and because of man's sin-darkened mind and heart, misleading. The most that can be said for natural revelation is that it leaves mankind *without excuse* before God (Rom 1:20). It does not of itself impart an adequate knowledge of God nor a sufficient standard of ethics.

The idea that Scripture and nature are co-ordinate revelations of God, each adequate and definite in its own field, sometimes called the 'double revelation theory', has been very well exposed as untenable by Dr. John C. Whitcomb in his monograph on *The Origin of the Solar System.* As *revelation* nature conveys

absolutely no knowledge that is not already conveyed in fuller and clearer form in Holy Scripture. To place nature on a par with Scripture as divine revelation betrays a basic misconception of the character, functions and limitations of the revelation of God in nature.

Nature is, of course, the proper object of scientific study. Legitimate science is the study of the phenomena of nature. This is properly regarded as included in the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28 – the command of God to mankind to subdue the earth and have dominion over its contents. But a recognition of the God-given cultural mandate and the proper inclusion of natural science within the scope of that mandate, does not amount to making nature co-ordinate with Scripture as a revelation of truth and duty.

Those who regard nature and Scripture as co-ordinate revelations of God commonly make the mistake of disregarding the necessity of spiritual regeneration for an ultimately valid knowledge of truth in any field, including both theology and the natural sciences. The scientist whose foolish heart is darkened by sin and who lacks the opening of the eyes of his understanding by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit will inevitably misinterpret what he observes in nature.

The unregenerate scientist *always* implicitly denies the truth of creation and providence. He *always* believes in brute facts – what Dr. Van Til has called the 'just-thereness' of facts, that is, their non-created character. Those who place the 'findings' of science (or rather of certain scientists), on a par with theological doctrines derived from Holy Scripture, as statements of truth, almost invariably fail to make any distinction between the regenerate and the unregenerate intellect. The fall of mankind and its effects on the human intellect is the great blind spot of those who desire to regard nature as a co-ordinate revelation with Scripture.

But even in the case of regenerate scientists, the products of scientific research cannot be equated in validity with theological truth derived from Scripture. The two are not parallel. In the case of Scripture we have, first, the revelation of God in his acts or deeds; secondly, we have an infallibly revealed and inspired interpretation of the meaning and significance of God's deeds, given to us in propositional form in the Bible; and thirdly, we have systematic formulations of the truth embodied in this propositional revelation, in the historic creeds and confessions of the Church and in the works of believing, regenerate systematic theologians. Thus between the basic data (God's acts or deeds) and man's formulations of systematic truth (creeds, theology), there is the middle stage, namely, divinely revealed and inspired propositional statements of the meaning of the divine acts.

Admittedly the Church councils which formulated the creeds, and the theologians who have produced systematic treatments of theology, were not infallibly inspired, though they were, indeed, illuminated by the Holy Spirit and

providentially guided in their work. Still, we must admit that they were fallible men. But these fallible men were not dealing with the raw data or unprocessed factuality of God's work. They were studying and systematizing a body of propositional truth given by infallible revelation and inspiration.

The scientist who deals with the phenomena of nature, on the other hand, is working with the raw data, the unprocessed factuality of nature. If he is unregenerate he is bound, inevitably, to misinterpret this factuality as to its ultimate significance. In matters of detail, of course, the unregenerate scientist may discover valid truth. The number of chromosomes in a cell of a plant or animal can be determined equally well by a Christian researcher or one who is an atheist, provided he possesses the requisite technical qualifications. But as to all ultimate matters of significance and value, the unregenerate worker can only go astray. No matter how sincere he may be, and how hard he may try to attain a scholarly scientific objectivity, in spite of himself he is powerfully biased against the reality of God, creation and providence. And lacking the middle state of infallible propositional truth which the Christian theologian has, the scientist – even the regenerate scientist – has no *infallibly sure* corrective of mistaken interpretations, unless, of course, he is willing to accept Holy Scripture as such a corrective.

The unregenerate scientist *is bound* to go astray from ultimate truth. The regenerate scientist *may* go astray from the ultimate truth. This is not to say that the regenerate scientist cannot discover truth from nature. It is only to affirm that the truth which he discovers from nature is relative and provisional, lacking the absolute and final character of truth derived from Scripture.

That the products of scientific research cannot properly be placed on a par with formulations of truth derived from Scripture, is further manifested by the fluid, constantly changing character of scientific thought. As Tennyson wrote, 'Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on from point to point.' Though we readily concede that there has been real progress in the discovery of truth by science, still ultimate truth is never reached, and whole blocks of scientific theory, once accepted as truth, have had to be given up or changed because they were suspended upon assumptions which further discovery proved to be untenable. The attempt to adjust theology and Christian belief to the 'conclusions' or 'findings' of science is wrong and futile because science itself is constantly moving on and changing its conclusions. A theology adjusted to the science of 150 years ago would be badly out of adjustment to the science of the present day. Theology based on the granite rock of infallible propositional truth given in Holy Scripture does not have to be changed or adjusted with every new development in the natural sciences. But there have been cases of theology after painfully getting adjusted to the science of the day, becoming embarrassed by the fact of the scientific world changing or abandoning the 'findings' which the theological scholars felt they must at all costs adjust to.

Nobody today believes in the notorious Piltdown Man. The fossils have been conclusively proved to be fraudulent. But there was a time not many years ago

when a large number of eminent biologists and palaeontologists held that the Piltdown Man was a genuine ape-like ancestor of modern man. He was given a scientific name, *Eoanthropus Dawsoni* – Dawson's Dawn Man – and high school textbooks on science confidently presented him, and even pictured him, complete with whiskers, as incontrovertibly real and important.

A dozen years ago astrophysicists confidently set forth two billion years – two with nine zeros after it – as the age of the earth. This has been successively modified to three billion, four billion and now four and a half billion years. Yet George Gamow in his *Biography of the Earth* (first published in 1941; reprinted 1948 and 1949) set forth the age of the earth as 'about two billion years', and supported this figure by three lines of evidence (astronomy, radioactivity of rocks, salinity of oceans). Gamow no longer adheres to the two billion figure. But before I commit myself to any of these figures as unquestionable truth, I want the astrophysicists to come to final agreement among themselves as to the age of the earth, and promise me that they will not drastically revise their figures in a few years' time!

The Bearing of Scripture on the Age of the Earth and of the Human Race

One point at which the evolutionary world-view presses upon us concerns the interpretation of the six creation days of Genesis. Related to this are the two questions of the age of the earth and the antiquity of the human race.

We should realize that it is possible for a person to believe in an old earth, and to believe that mankind is much older than Ussher allowed for, without being an evolutionist. Age and origin are not the same question. No doubt most of those who hold that the earth is very old are evolutionists, but still it is quite possible to hold this opinion without being an evolutionist.

Ussher's figure of 4004 B.C. for the creation has been generally abandoned, even by scholars who are strict believers in biblical inerrancy. Ussher's scheme rests upon unwarranted assumptions. I once accepted Ussher's chronology, but later gave it up. A brief, popular, but very cogent treatment of this subject is found in *Before Abraham,* by Byron C. Nelson – unfortunately now out of print. This book convinced me that Ussher's figure cannot stand.

Among strictly orthodox Reformed theologians Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield was quite tolerant of views of the age of the earth and the antiquity of man far in excess of Ussher's figures. (*On the Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race,* in *The Princeton Theological Review,* ix. 1911, pp.1-25; reprinted in *Studies* in *Theology,* Oxford University Press, New York, 1932, pp. 235-258.)

As to the nature of the six creation days, three generic views have been held by orthodox theologians. These may be called the Literal, the Figurative, and the Literary Framework views. The literal view maintains that the six days are ordinary twenty-four-hour days. The figurative view holds that they are long periods of time, of indeterminate length. The framework view holds that the six-day schematism is merely a literary device and really has nothing to do with time. No less a theologian than Augustine held this literary framework view

(cited in Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith,* p. 172). Augustine held that the whole creation was complete in an instant of time, and that it is only described under the six-day scheme to make it humanly apprehensible. Dr. Bavinck himself was reluctant to affirm the literal view of the six days. He wrote, 'Scripture speaks very definitely of days which are reckoned by the measurement of night and morning and which lie at the basis of the distribution of the days of the week in Israel and its festive calendar. Nevertheless Scripture itself contains data which oblige us to think of these days in Genesis as different from our ordinary units as determined by the revolutions of the earth'. (*Our Reasonable Faith,* p. 172.)

Each of the three generic views has something in its favour and each is involved in some problems or difficulties. On the whole, the literal interpretation deserves the preference. The arguments brought against it are not really conclusive. Remember, we are here dealing not with how nature functions today, but with God's actions in setting nature functioning in the beginning.

Still, there may be just enough uncertainty about this matter that perhaps the path of wisdom for us is to avoid an absolute and dogmatic pronouncement about the nature of the six days. The age of the earth, like the age of the solar system, is still a speculative problem in scientific circles, and the last word has certainly not yet been said on it. We have good reason, it may be, to discard Ussher's calculation – good reason derived not from science but from considerations internal to Scripture itself. But certainly this does not mean that we must jump to the opposite extreme and begin speaking of billions of years.

It is one thing to say that the modern scientific view of the earth has motivated biblical scholars to undertake a restudy of the biblical data. It is quite another, and an improper thing, to say that formerly we believed in Scripture but now we are going to base our belief on the 'findings' of science. Christian belief may never be based on any other standard than the written Word of God.

Incidentally, even in the field of scientific research, the Carbon-14 or radiocarbon method of dating ancient organic remains has resulted in drastically scaling down some datings which were formerly set high on the basis of evolutionistic geology. A striking example is cited by John Klotz in *Genes, Genesis and Evolution,* pages 112-113. When the Ohio Turnpike was being constructed, a deep cut was made through a hill near Streetsboro, Ohio. Wood was found deep underground, which when tested by the radiocarbon method yielded an age of 8,600 years plus or minus 300 years. The scientists could hardly believe that this figure was correct, because the peat deposit in which the wood was found had been geologically dated as 35,000 years old. So a second sample of the wood was tested, and this time the figure was 8,450 years old plus or minus 250 years. In either case the radiocarbon method resulted in a reduction of about seventy-five per cent of the age as determined by geology. It is now recognized by many geologists that the melting of the last continental glacier in North America occurred about 12,000 years ago instead of 20,000 years ago as formerly believed. (Klotz, *Genes, Genesis and Evolution,* p. 377.)

The Bearing of Scripture on the Uniqueness of the Human Race

Man alone was created in the image of God. Biological or genetic continuity of man with any other form of life has never been proved and remains to this day a dogmatic philosophic faith of evolutionistic science. Evolutionistic scholars start by eliminating the idea of God by an exclusively naturalistic *a priori* or basic assumption. Then they decide what they think *may* have happened. Then they proceed to build on this an immense superstructure of systematic thought *as if it had been demonstrated that it really did happen.* Nagel, *The Structure of Science,* is a good example of this, as is also *The Ambidextrous Universe* by Martin Gardner. On the other hand, *Implications of Evolution* by G. A. Kerkut distinguishes fairly and clearly between a *priori* assumption and factual data, and thus forms a good corrective to books of the other type.

Adam as the first man, created in the image of God, is of course indispensable to Christian theology. A religion without the first Adam will soon become a religion in which the second Adam is regarded as unnecessary. Thus theological liberalism today regards Jesus, not as the *object* of Christian faith, but merely as a *subject* of faith, the first of the series of people called Christians.

Psalm 8:4-8 teaches that God made man a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honour. This certainly cannot be reconciled with the evolutionistic notion that *man at his origin was at his lowest,* barely above the brutes. Can you think of the Neanderthal Man, Peking Man, Java Man, etc., pictured in standard biology textbooks as pitiably grotesque, barely human specimens – can you really think of these caricatures of early mankind as a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour?

1 Corinthians 15:20-21 states that 'All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.' Granted that this chapter of Paul was not intended to teach scientific knowledge, yet it does teach something definite, and what it does teach cannot be reconciled with the notion of a basic continuity between mankind and the sub-human creation. At least it teaches that there is a radical difference between man's bodily organism and that of beasts, birds and fishes.

In Ecclesiastes 3:20-21 we read, 'All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?' Here we are taught that man resembles the animals in that his bodily organism was formed from dust and turns to dust again. Like the animals, man is mortal and subject to death and decay. But there is a difference, and the inspired writer asks the question, 'Who gives adequate attention to this difference? Who recognizes as he should that the spirit of man goes upward while that of the beast goes downward to the earth?' The treatment of this passage in H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Ecclesiastes,* pages 96-101, is most illuminating.

This text in Ecclesiastes 3 should be taken along with Ecclesiastes 12:7, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God

who gave it.' The evolutionary world view, in its common and prevalent form, regards man as an advanced or improved animal. Nowhere is this more evident than in some schools of academic psychology where the behaviour of human beings is studied in the light of experiments on dogs and white rats. Evolution-based psychology emphasizes that man shares with animals the conditioned reflex. It is commonly blind to the truth that man is a person made in the image of God with a spirit that transcends the material and the mechanical. This type of evolutionary psychology even tends to hold that human freedom is an illusion, and that a man's acts are determined by hidden impersonal factors which he cannot control and of which he is not even aware.

The uniqueness of humanity is absolutely essential to Christianity. Any teaching which tends to undermine this, as the evolutionary world-view does, is destructive of the Christian Faith.

As Joshua said to Israel long ago, so we can and should say to the Christian Church and its institutions at the present day, 'Choose you this day whom ye will serve' (Josh 24:15). Shall we compromise with the evolutionary world-view, or shall we remain faithful to the theistic and Christian view as taught in the Word of God?

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Books

The Footsteps of God, John Legg, 352pp., EP £5.95.

Here is a splendid book for new Christians who need to be introduced to the history of the Church from the early martyrs. The method used is to tell the story of the Church through her leaders. (The biographical method is employed in this issue of *Reformation Today.* You can test your interest by reading about John Hooper in one page, and John Foxe in two pages.) John Legg gives us lively biographies of Polycarp, Athanasius, Augustine, Wycliffe, John Hus, Luther, Calvin, Tyndale, Knox, the Covenanters (Robert Bruce and Alexander Henderson), the Puritans (Richard Baxter and John Bunyan). The Great Awakening is highlighted in the lives of George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley and Jonathan Edwards; and the Missionary Awakening in those of Andrew Fuller and William Carey. The life of William Wilberforce is used to introduce us to the Clapham Sect. The Fifty-Nine Revival is described and the history ends with the story of C. H. Spurgeon.

While using the biographical method the author does not fall into the trap of attributing God's glory to men (see Isaiah 42:8). They were mere instruments. Also the author is not enslaved by his approach, because he brings in many others along the way, such as the account of the slave girl Blandina who was one of thousands thrown to the lions in the amphitheatres of Rome (pp. 19-21).

John Legg does not allow the story of the Church and her leaders to end in mid-air. He concludes with a description of characteristics which marked all the leaders and martyrs. One characteristic was their faithfulness in preaching the gospel both positively and negatively. 'They contended for the gospel against Romanism, formalism, moderatism and modernism, so that the truths of salvation might survive and men might be saved. It is not enough to go on working in our small corner and allow the rest of the world to go to ruin. Before long the infection will spread to our "parish" and our cherished liberty will be gone' (p. 347).

How greatly the leaders of the past contrast with what the author describes as 'those who appear on TV who deny the historic faith, the men with the gimmicks, the denominational leaders and ecumenically minded bureaucrats of our day' (p. 14). We are warned about the imperative need for wisdom and spirituality to fight the battle of these days, which in some ways is the same but which in many other ways is different (p. 341ff.). We require skills obtained freshly and directly from the throne of grace so that the Scriptures will be a sharp sword in our hands as they proved to be in the hands of our predecessors (Heb 4:12).

This most readable book is worthy of a wide readership.

The Historical Reliability of the Gospels, Craig Blomberg, IVP, 268pp., £6.95.

F. F. Bruce whose often revised and reprinted book, *The N.T. Documents: Are they Reliable?* has given invaluable service, suggests in the foreword to the above that 'no body of literature in the world has been exposed to more stringent and analytical study than the four Gospels over the last 200 years'. Are the four Gospels historically reliable? This subject is taken up in a most thorough and readable fashion by Craig Blomberg. He describes the traditional approaches to the reliability of the Gospels fairly briefly in 18 pages and then describes new methods (54 pages). To those not well-read in this field this may be boring, but not the next section, 30 pages dealing with the subject of the miracles. The author ends each chapter with a succinct conclusion, and if there was room I would quote in full the conclusion relating to miracles, because it is excellent. Here he ends with a quote from C. S. Lewis, 'the accounts of the "miracles" in the first century Palestine are either lies, or legends, or history'. The whole purpose of this book is to demonstrate the historicity and reliability of the Gospels and to show that the apostles were not trading in lies or legends.

Subsequent chapters deal with the problem of seeming contradictions in the Synoptic Gospels, special problems connected with the Gospel of John, the Jesus tradition outside the Gospels, and finally there is an important chapter on the genre of the Gospels and related questions to do with historicity. In all, this is a most valuable book for which we are very thankful.

John Foxe 1517-1587

During the years 1555-1558 approximately 277 men, women and children, under the merciless reign of Queen Mary, were burned at the stake in England. It was important that an accurate record of the testimonies of these martyrs who preferred to be burned alive rather than forsake their faith be written and preserved. John Foxe was the Lord's provision for that task. Looking back we can now see how from his early years he was being equipped to be the martyrologist of that epoch. It is fitting that we remember him in this anniversary year of his death in 1587.

An outline of the life of John Foxe

Born in Lincolnshire in 1517, Foxe entered Brasenose College, Oxford, at the age of sixteen. At the outset it was evident he would be a scholar and a man of books. His reading led to his conversion, which took place gradually. By the time he had his MA and had become a fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, he was corresponding with Hugh Latimer and William Tyndale. Enlightenment in the truth led to him being at loggerheads with the superstitions of Rome. Because of his Protestant convictions he was to suffer great poverty. Scholars in those days required patrons, wealthy landlords who would employ them as teachers in their homes. He found such a patron in Warwickshire where he married Agnes Randall, but the appointment was short-lived and the young couple moved to London.

Here Foxe nearly starved to death. He seemed bereft of any future prospect. One day as he sat forlornly in St. Paul's churchyard a stranger came and sat next to him and placed a generous sum of money into his hands. The stranger was in all likelihood a messenger from the Earl of Surrey, because within three days he obtained a position as tutor in the Earl's household at Reigate in Surrey.

The Earl was beheaded for a political offence in 1547, but Foxe continued as teacher of the Earl's children right through the reign of Edward, from 1547 to 1553, the year of the accession of the dreaded Mary to the throne. During that time, in 1550, Foxe had been ordained in London by bishop Nicholas Ridley as a deacon in the church.

John Foxe wasted no time in leaving England, going first to Frankfurt and then settling at Basle where there were many English refugees. He had already begun to collect materials for his work which was eventually to reach the size of 1,700 folio pages. Bishop Edmund Grindal in England provided invaluable help by collecting letters, factual data and testimonies of the martyrs, and sending them to Foxe. Basle was an ideal haven in which the industrious literary labourer could work as an author, although he had to earn his living as a proofreader for one of the Basle publishers.

In 1559 he was able to return to England where again he faced the problem of lack of finance. He persuaded the Duke of Norfolk to give him a job and continued at the same time to work on his biographical accounts of the martyrs which included many of those who died before the Marian killings. By 1563 the work was ready for press. As was the custom it had a long title which really served as a blurb. A part reads as follows,

Acts and monuments of these latter and perilous days, touching matters of the Church, wherein are comprehended and described the great persecutions and horrible troubles that have been wrought

and practised by the Romish prelates, especially in this realm of England and Scotland, from the year of our Lord 1,000 unto the time now present, gathered and collected according to the true copies of writings certificatory – as also out of the bishops' registers by John Foxe.

The role of 'Foxe's Book of Martyrs'

This powerful book was an immediate best seller despite its size. In 1570 Foxe revised his work and there was a new edition. The same year Elizabeth was excommunicated by the Pope. Furthermore a revolt of the Catholic Earls in the North of England had taken place. These conditions greatly favoured the testimony of Foxe's book of Martyrs, the influence of which proved immense and enduring. Convocation ordered that a copy be placed in every collegiate church. Deans, archdeacons and resident canons were to have copies for their families. It was asserted, moreover, that this book was part of the authoritative history of the Church in England.

Abridgements of the work were made at the end of the eighteenth century and a variety of abridged editions have been published ever since. Much of the original work with the correct title *Acts and Monuments* consists of important documentation. Enemies of what the martyrs believed and died for have attacked the work as biased, but competent students are well able to prove the solid and accurate nature of Foxe's work. Bishop Gilbert Burnet said that he had never been able to find an error or discover any prevarications in Foxe's work. In 1940 J. F. Mozley vindicated Foxe as an historian in his work *John Foxe and his Book.*

The best available edition of the full work is in eight volumes edited by Josiah Pratt and published in 1853. The Evangelical Library, 78A Chiltern Street, London W1, have a set in their reference section.

In these days when it is doubtful whether there is one bishop in the entire Church of England who is not involved in the Ecumenical Movement, it is important to recall with thankfulness better times when there were bishops, pastors, and lay Christians who were prepared to die rather than deny the gospel. We should also note with gratitude the wonderful providence of the Lord, in that he did not let his faithful witnesses burn at the stake without equipping and raising up an historian to preserve their testimonies for us. The syncretistic, liberalistic and Romanistic trends of our day are such that the candle lit by the martyrs is threatened to be extinguished. It may be sooner than we expect that the work of John Foxe will have a renewed significance in order to preserve this country with its leaders from going back into superstition.

John Foxe was a man of peace. With others he worked hard as a peacemaker during the year he was at Frankfurt. The exiles at Frankfurt were at that time engaged in a notorious controversy. We should not be surprised that Foxe pleaded for tolerance in one of his shorter works addressed to the nobility, and written in Latin. He possessed a profound belief in the sovereignty of God and saw clearly the great conflict between the purpose of Christ on earth and those spiritual forces opposed to our Saviour.

When he died at the age of seventy he was buried at St. Giles' church, Cripplegate (now behind Fore Street, London EC2). On his tomb is a Latin inscription which translated reads, 'He presented the Marian martyrs, like phoenixes, alive from their ashes, chiefly to fulfil every duty of filial affection.' May we too regard our faithful brethren with love and gratitude, and foster in our hearts a determination to be faithful, as they were.

It is unlikely that all our readers will concur exactly with all the statements of this excellent article. The Scripture references have been included and these indicate how the author has sought to base everything on Scripture.

Preparing for Christian Marriage

Bob Sheehan

Increasingly in the modern world marriage is being viewed as outmoded. Relationships of a temporary (let's try and see) nature are being introduced to replace it. This raises the question:

IS THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP IMPORTANT?

The biblical answer to this question is clear – 'Marriage should be honoured by all'.[1] It is not to be viewed as a desirable relationship for those who like to live that way, nor merely as one option among many. Rather the Scriptures require *universal* honour to be given to marriage.

The reason for this high view of marriage is to be found in the fact that God ordained the marriage relationship. In answering questions about divorce our Lord reminded his hearers that God created humans male and female, and in bringing Eve to Adam had ordained marriage and set out its basic elements.[2] In the Old Testament this statement about marriage is made without the speaker being identified, but in the New Testament our Lord specifically attributes it to God.[3]

God's commitment to the marriage relationship is further demonstrated by his use of it as an illustration of his spiritual relationship with his people. God the Father and God the Son are viewed as husbands married to Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church.[4] The whole book of the Song of Solomon is devoted to illustrating this fact.[5]

THE REASONS FOR MARRIAGE

Traditionally marriage services detail three reasons why God ordained marriage, all of which are clearly set out in Scripture.

1 Companionship

When created by God in a sin-free world Adam was righteous, holy and knowledgeable yet incomplete.[6] As he was uniquely made in the image of God no other creature in God's world could satisfy his needs and adequately complement him.[7] His survey of and rule over the animal creation heightened his sense of uniqueness and emphasised his loneliness. God recognised this and created Eve to be Adam's wife, to complement his characteristics and to relieve him of loneliness,[8] the great scourge of the single person.

2 Childbearing

When God brought man and woman together in the first marriage he commanded them to be fruitful and increase in number, to fill the earth and subdue it.[9] The idea that a marriage should be entered into with the *intention* of never having children, solely to allow the couple to have a relationship but no family, is not able to be justified scripturally. The presence of children in a marriage is considered a blessing from God.[10] The bringing up of children in the context of godly influence is one of the privileges of marriage.[11] This is not of course to say that the presence of children is essential to validate a marriage. God rules over all things, including childbirth. If he keeps a couple from having children no blame can be attached to them for not fulfilling this part of marriage.[12] Also some marriages are contracted in which there are medical reasons or reasons of old age where childbearing is inappropriate.[13] These are exceptions that do not invalidate the rule.

3 Sexual Relations

God made humankind male and female[14] and ordained and blessed sexual union.[15] The sexual drive within humans can lead to sin if it is not fulfilled in marriage. While the Scriptures commend singleness as an aid to wholeheartedness in Christian work, without the distractions arising from marriage, it views singleness as a gift from God.[16] Those who need to be married, not having the gift of celibacy, should marry rather than be inflamed with sexual desire and enticed into extra-marital sin.[17] In this way holiness can be maintained among God's people.[18]

THE NATURE OF MARRIAGE

In ordaining marriage God gave three directions, which may be summarised as leaving, cleaving and uniting.[19] These are the three fundamental elements in a marriage and may be compared to the legs supporting a three-legged stool. Deficiency in any of these areas may bring a marriage into serious difficulties, or at least arouse aggravation and tension.

1 Leaving

Even in modern society where adolescents often leave home to go to further training or to find employment, and therefore to some degree break away from their family unit, they are still considered as part of the family until they get married. 'Going home' usually refers to the parental home rather than the college lodgings, city flat, or hostel, where they live.

In ordaining marriage God decreed that it involves leaving the parents.[20] The old unit of father, mother and children is put behind for the new unit of husband and wife. The *primary* sphere of responsibility changes. The old order is replaced by a new one.[21] The first loyalty of the couple is to each other, not to their parents.

This is not to say, of course, that a married couple are to be neglectful and disregard their parents. They will have a God-given responsibility to honour them,[22] and to help them when they face needs and distress.[23] The whole

orientation of biblical thought is to a more family-conscious life-style than is at present prevalent in Western society. The elderly are to be recipients of great respect.[24] However, if a married couple consider themselves as the primary unit and accept that they are self-contained, they will invariably sort out problems for themselves rather than bringing their parents in on every problem. This will bind them together. They will develop their *own* way of doing things, rather than merely importing the traditions of their respective parents, which may conflict with each other. 'My mother never did it like that!', are typical statements that breed disharmony. It is far better to leave parental traditions behind and for the couple to work out their own way of doing things. In many areas of life there is no such thing as *one* right way but a series of options. The couple should select their option.

2 Cleaving

More time will be spent on 'cleaving'[25] or 'being united'[26] because under this heading we will consider the particular responsibilities of the husband and wife in relation to each other.

a. *The husband's role*

The husband needs to keep before him the fact that the model for his relationship with his wife is that of Christ's attitude and actions towards his Church.[27] What Christ is to the Church, the husband is to be to his wife.

The key word is **love.** Christ loved the Church. Husbands are to love their wives.[28] Of the three possible Greek words for love Paul did not use the words that emphasise sexual union and friendship, but the word that involves self-giving.

The love of Christ to his Church has many characteristics. It is **freely shown.** The marriage of Christ and his Church is not a 'shot-gun' wedding, forced upon the participants by circumstances. Christ loved the Church because he desired to do so.[29] The husband's love should be similarly genuine. To be married should not be a duty to prevent further nagging, or because of threats of what will happen if the courtship is discontinued. True love does not do what is expected under a spirit of burden, but willingly does what is good.[30]

Christ's love is **gracious.**[31] Grace blesses those who are undeserving. It does not work on a *quid pro quo* principle. The husband who enters into a marriage relationship determined to proportion his love to the degree to which his wife pleases him is totally unChristlike. If Christ only loved his Church when she was co-operative and pleasing to him, would he ever love her?[32] In most marriages the wife will often be pleasing and easy to love, but when she is not, the husband's responsibility to show gracious love, to still seek her good and benefit, is by tact. Theorists and idealists be warned, it is not easy!

Christ's love is **sacrificial.**[33] He gave himself for his Church with the aim of doing her good. He wanted to benefit her and considered no cost too great.[34] Finding out what is beneficial to the wife involves understanding and taking into

account her needs, fears and desires. Christ understood that the Church needed cleansing, sanctification, and glorification, and provided these[35] even though it was very costly to himself. In the same way the husband is to live with his wife with knowledge[36] and understanding[37] of her situation. He is then to provide for her with the same sort of care and devotion that he lavishes on his own health.[38] Her welfare is to be his chief concern, and her essential frailty, that which enables her to be a wife and mother, feminine and gentle, is to be taken into his consideration.[39] He is to benefit her even if it is costly to himself.

The love of Christ is also **lasting.** On earth he loved his disciples to the end,[40] and in his heavenly state there is no final point at which his love ceases.[41] In the same way the love of the husband is not a temporary thing, but until death.[42] The cutting short of the marriage relationship by divorce was never part of God's intention for marriage. Permission for divorce was granted as a concession to human weakness through sin.[43] Fundamentally God hates divorce.[44] The grounds on which divorce and separation are permissible, although never commanded or commended, are only two – sexual sin and religious desertion.[45]

The marriage vows reflect its lasting nature. Not only do they affirm that marriage is for as long as both partners shall live, but also that difficulties, ill-health, and poverty, do not annul the vows. A downturn in the marriage in any of these areas does not give the man or the woman a right to think the time has come for a change of partner.

In his love for the Church Christ is **faithful.** He stays with his Church whatever happens to her.[46] The fearful warnings that are given against adultery in the Scriptures should be enough to convince us that God has a deep-seated hatred of unfaithfulness in marriage.[47] Just as marriage is presented as the great picture of a good relationship with God, so adultery is the description of a faithless, rebellious relationship.[40] Faithfulness to the wife is seen as having high priority in God's eyes.

It is in this context that the role of the husband as the head of the wife is to be understood. His headship is Christlike, the headship of the Saviour.[49] Christ does not rule as Head over the Church as a bullying tyrant. He is not self-centred and arrogant – the 'get my slippers and know your place' type of husband who hangs his horns behind the front door! Some people cannot see rule without aggression. Christ rules the Church authoritatively, as the real Head, yet with patience, gentleness, understanding and love.[50] Christ is neither bossy nor 'hen-pecked' but leads with dignity and sensitivity. Headship implies both responsibility and leadership.

The husband needs to recognise that he has a God-given role of leadership within marriage, which it is sinful to avoid. Leadership is not totalitarian autocracy, but Christlike, for the good of the wife and family,

b. *The wife's role*

The analogy of Christ and the Church holds for the wife as well as the husband. She is to respond to her husband as the Church ought to respond to Christ.[51]

The Church has respect and reverence for Christ because of who he is. He is the Head of the Church.[52] So the wife is to respect her husband as the one appointed by God to be head of the household.[53] This respect is to be more than a matter of lip-service. It involves submission to his leadership.[54] Of course, as always, there is an exclusion clause. Submission is to be in every area but only as the Church submits to Christ.[55] Christ never requires the Church to do evil, for he seeks her good. In the same way, a wife is not required to follow her husband's lead into sin. This is the only exception.

The characteristics of a wife's attitude in her relationship to her husband are summarised under the words love, and a gentle and quiet spirit.[56] There can be a respect that lacks love and is fed by fear.[57] The wife is encouraged to love the one she respects. She is not to view him as her oppressor but to give herself to him and for him. It is difficult to contemplate the bossy and garrulous woman being at the same time a woman of quiet and gentle spirit. Rather than these latter qualities being seen as evidences of weakness they are commended as virtues.

Just as the aim of the Church is to glorify Christ,[58] so the wife is to be the glory of her husband.[59] She is to act in a way that will bring him praise and respect. This is the wife's way of living for the benefit of her husband, just as he is to live for her benefit. A good wife will cause her husband to be held in esteem.[60]

It is an observable fact that if a woman has a tyrannical husband she usually receives sympathy. 'Poor woman,' the neighbours say, 'that husband of hers is a real brute.' However, let a husband have a rebellious and loud-mouthed wife, and for everyone who says 'poor fellow', many more will hold him in contempt for being feeble enough to be henpecked! A husband's reputation largely depends on his wife. The saying, 'behind every great man is a great woman' is truer than many people will acknowledge!

The wife who is loving, of a quiet, gentle, submissive disposition, and who aims to enhance her husband's reputation, is not the colourless, brainless, initiative-free drudge that some feminists would like to suggest. True, she has chosen marriage, and therefore to abandon selfish individualism for a life of putting her husband and children first,[61] but there is plenty of scope for initiative and a wide variety of activities in pursuit of those ends.

Although this is much contested today I would affirm that the wife does have primary responsibility for the home.[62] She recognises that she must provide the stable context in which her husband can pursue his career and her children can develop.[63] Her life can be full and busy, efficiently providing food and clothing.[64] She can find opportunities to buy, sell and earn some extra money for her to spend in ways *not inconsistent with* her family responsibilities.[65] Paid employment is not a sin for wives and mothers as long as it does not remove them from their primary responsibilities to their husbands and children.

The wife should also make opportunities to do good works to help others that are in need.[66] Great opportunities for expressions of practical Christianity can arise while husbands are at work and children at school. Wives and husbands are placed in different environments which provide different evangelistic possibilities. It should not be assumed that a quiet and gentle spirit of submissiveness means that the wife is treated as if devoid of thought. A wife following the biblical guidelines and living in the reverence of God will be appreciated and her opinions will be sought.[67] Contentious wives drive husbands from them.[68] Good wives gain confidence and influence with their husbands.[69]

The same requirements of a lasting marriage and faithfulness within it are placed upon the wife as on the husband. These we have already considered, and they are reflected in the identity of language in the vows, taken by the woman as well as the man, in the traditional marriage service.

3 Uniting

By uniting, reference is being made to the biblical concept of the two becoming one flesh.[70] Two individuals join together through sexual intercourse and become one new marital unit.

While it is right that Christians should show due modesty in considering such an intimate subject, it is necessary for us to recognise the honourable nature of sexual relations within marriage. God made us male and female.[71] God fuses the two into one.[72] Sexual relations within marriage are not only viewed as necessary to avoid sin[73] but also are used as a description of the relationship between Christ and his Church.[74] This fact should make it clear that there is nothing inherently evil or undesirable about the physical side of marriage. It is not therefore to be despised, or thought of as somehow carnal by Christians.

The basis for sexual relations in marriage is not a lustful self-gratification.[75] The love between the married partners is being expressed. Such relations between husband and wife are commanded in marriage and are to occur regularly and by mutual consent. Neither the husband nor the wife are to consider even their bodies as belonging to each other.[76] The fact that the sexual side of marriage is to be an enjoyed part of the Christian's marriage is clear from the attitude of Scripture.[77]

As one of the consequences of sexual activity within marriage will usually be the birth of children, Christians need to decide how to plan their families. The fact that this is now a possibility is no more to be rejected as unnatural than is the use of medicine. Christians should desire to have children, but God has never revealed the correct number, or the best period between each child.

Some Christians believe that the 'safe period' method is both natural and safe,[78] but many believe it is both unnatural and unsafe. In choosing between modern

contraceptives Christians ought to avoid those which work by aborting the conceived person, i.e. intra-uterine devices and morning-after pills, because of the very real biblical objections to abortion.[79]

It would be wrong, however, to limit the uniting of the two into one to physical union. A spiritual union is also to occur. This is the reason why believers must only marry believers. A marriage between a Christian and a non-Christian can be stable, but it is of necessity incomplete because it is the union of a child of God with a child of Satan. This is why it is forbidden by the Scriptures.[80]

Spiritual oneness will express itself in various ways, including joint Bible readings and prayer.[81] The usefulness of a Christian couple is seen in Priscilla and Aquilla as they worked together to benefit Apollos.[82] Christian couples who take their spiritual union seriously, and who pray together each evening, will have a very real reason to quickly overcome any difficulties that occur, so that their worship will be acceptable to God,[83] and their prayers unhindered.[84]

References

1 Heb 13:4.
2 Matt 19:4-6 with Gen 2:18-24.
3 Gen 2:24; Matt 19:5.
4 Is 54:5; Eph 5:25f.
5 See Oylott, S. (1984) *A Life Worth Living and A Lord Worth Loving* (Evangelical Press) for an exposition of Song of Solomon.
6 Eph 4:24; Col 3:10.
7 Gen 1:26-27.
8 Gen 2:18-24.
9 Gen 1:28.
10 Ps 127:3-6 and Ps 128:1-4.
11 Mal 2:15-16; Eph 6:4; Tit 2:4.
12 Gen 30:1-2; 1 Sam 1:5-6.
13 Gen 18:11.
14 Matt 19:4.
15 Gen 2:24; 1:28.
16 1 Cor 7:32-35, 7.
17 1 Cor 7:8-9.
18 1 Thess 4:3-7.
19 Gen 2:24 (A.V.).
20 Gen 2:24.
21 Gen 24:50-61.
22 Ex 20:12.
23 1 Tim 5:4,8 cf. Matt 15:3-9.
24 Prov 1:8-9; 23:22-25; Phm 9.
25 Gen 2:24 (A.V.).
26 Gen 2:24 (N.I.V.).
27 Eph 5:25.
28 Eph 5:25, 28, 33.
29 John 15:16.
30 1 John 5:3.
31 2 Cor 8:9.
32 Is 54:10.
33 Eph 5:25.
34 Eph 5:23-27.
35 Eph 5:26-27.
36 1 Pet 3:7 (A.V.).
37 1 Pet 3:7 (N.A.S.V.).
38 Eph 5:29.
39 1 Pet 3:7.
40 John 13:1.
41 Rom 8:35-39.
42 Matt 19:3-6.
43 Matt 19:7-8.
44 Mal 2:16.
45 Matt 19:9; 1 Cor 7:10-16.
46 Matt 6:18; John 10:11-13.
47 1 Cor 6:9-10; Prov 7.
48 Hos 1:2; Jam 4:4.
49 Eph 5:23.
50 Col 3:19.
51 Eph 5:22-24; Col 3:18.
52 Eph 5:23; Col 1:18.
53 Eph 5:33.
54 Eph 5:22; Col 3:18; 1 Pet 3:5-6.
55 Eph 5:24.
56 Tit 2:4; 1 Pet 3:4.
57 1 Pet 3:6.
58 Phil 1:20-21.
59 1 Cor 11:7.
60 Prov 31:23.
61 Tit 2:4-5;
62 Tit 2:5; Prov 31:27.
63 Prov 31:10-12; 28-31.
64 Prov 31:13-15, 19, 21-22.
65 Prov 31:16-18, 24.
66 Prov 31:20; 1 Tim 5:20.
67 Prov 31:28-31, 26.
68 Prov 21:19; 25:24.
69 Prov 31:11, 26; 1 Pet 3:1-2.
70 Gen 2:24.
71 Matt 19:4.
72 Matt 19:6.
73 1 Cor 7:9.
74 Eph 5:31-32; 1 Cor 6:17.
75 1 Thess 4:4-5.
76 1 Cor 7:4-5.
77 Prov 5:18-19.
78 Geldenhuys, N. *The Intimate Life.*
79 Ps 51:5; Ex 21:22-25; Luke 1:15, 41, 44.
80 1 Cor 7:39; 2 Cor 6:14f.
81 1 Pet 3:7.
82 Acts 18:24-28.
83 Matt 5:23-24.
84 1 Pet 3:7.

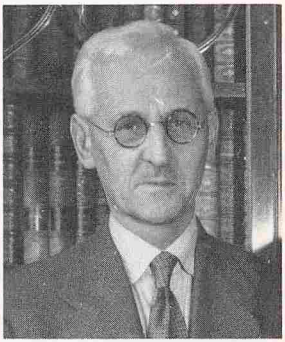
A Christian with Two Lives

As with Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones the lifespan of Mr. S. M. Houghton ran parallel with the years of this twentieth century. He slipped home painlessly during the month of June this year. During his last months he suffered from cancer, but went on with his work right up to the end, using the very last vestiges of his physical strength and at the same time enjoying perfect peace of mind. He was blessed with a well grounded full assurance of eternal life (Heb 10:22).

It was through the Doctor that I first realized what preaching was all about and it was through Mr. Houghton that I had my first lesson in writing. There are others who would testify to that. Writing is a hard discipline and my first lesson from Mr. Houghton was a painful one, three typed pages of corrections for a MS of modest size! His prodigious memory was such that he did not expect to have to correct his pupils a second time! During a visit a month before he died he sweetly corrected a wrong preposition which I had used!

Moses had three lives, one in Egypt, one as a shepherd, and one as a prophet. Mr. Houghton had two, one as a teacher of history in a grammar school at Rhyl in North Wales, and the second as chief editor of the Banner of Truth. During the second period he lived in the proximity of Oxford, but seldom had to have recourse to the university libraries there. He built up his own as we will see. His first life took him to 1960. The second to 1987. The first was a preparation for the second.

Such was the carnage during the First World War that to go to the trenches was like a death sentence. In 1918 young Sidney was sent to the war front in France. At the last moment he was appointed to anti-aircraft service behind the line of battle. He attended Christian services at Abbeville and on return from France continued under the means of grace which led to his conversion and his baptism in 1920. The minister preached appropriately on the text Acts 22:16. Sidney began as a



Baptist and never wavered in his convictions, which can be accurately described as Spurgeonic in character with a strong evangelistic emphasis. He loved Spurgeon, and used to cut up old volumes of Spurgeon's sermons and distribute them, often including one in his letters. Later it was to be his joy to undertake the major work of abridgement and editing of the four volume autobiography into two volumes.

In 1926 he married Miriam Yarwood. Miriam's brother, Frank Yarwood, has always been a faithful supporter with his family of the annual Evangelical and Reformed Conference in Natal, South Africa.

Mr. Houghton's appointment to Rhyl Grammar School in 1925 ended with his being headmaster when he retired in 1960. He had always been active with his pen on historical and biographical themes and it was then that his life took off on a pathway which proved of enormous benefit. He had developed an aptitude for meticulous editing, especially in the art of correcting historical and doctrinal materials. This proved invaluable to the Banner of Truth. Virtually every item for publication passed through his hands, the monthly magazine as well as the books. This included the daunting task of actually correcting the mistakes of the Doctor and Arnold Dallimore, men of very strong mind to say the least! Editorially he knew how to control Iain Murray, which was no small

achievement, since nobody else has succeeded as far as we know! Indeed he had the authority to handle all the younger generation by virtue of his superior knowledge and mastery of the English language. He told me there was only one person whose manuscripts were virtually impeccable. I can guess who that author is, and attribute it to the discipline of his having learned Latin thoroughly.

When we visited Mr. Houghton it was customary to take a walk, not in the pleasant environs of Abingdon but rather a leisurely march of inspection along the shelves to survey some of his 30,000 'assistants'. Over a period of about sixty years he was accumulating books at the rate of about 1.4 a day! This great library he has bequeathed to the Evangelical Movement of Wales and it will be housed at Bryntirion where the college will have the advantage of its use. Books are like cats and dogs. They appreciate handling and affection. They love the uniform temperature of central heating, and detest damp and cold. We can be sure that Sidney Maurice Houghton hoped, as we do, that his library will be very well used by the students and staff at Bryntirion, and that there will be a capable librarian who will lavish hospitality on the books and bind up those which are weary.

We can learn timely lessons from our older brother now in celestial company. The first lesson is that of mental and spiritual discipline. We have entered an age which is flabby and supine with regard to the combination of mental and devotional discipline. It is reported that in the USA the average daily prayer time of an evangelical is two minutes, and for a minister seven. Mr. Houghton was a watchman in the sense that he always kept a watch on his mind and heart. He was thorough in his Bible reading and consistent in his life of prayer.

Generally speaking the Americans are moving from a tubby and flabby physical condition towards a new concern, sometimes obsession, and almost a religion, about fitness. Their gymnasia are equipped with the most sophisticated machinery designed to build up the body. This example is spreading to other countries. But what about the mind? And what about the soul and intercessory prayer? It is helpful to be fit. Mr. Houghton was like a greyhound in leanness, but better still possessed a mental concentration second to none. He could fix his mind on a task and hold to it for hours on end until it was done. The custom with some is to have records or cassettes or radio blazing away, and rounds and rounds of drinks, sweets and chocolates, yet they assure us that this does not affect their concentration. Don't believe it! We need to train and exercise ourselves in spiritual discipline.

Closely related to the above is the ethic of work before pleasure. My temptation (we should confess our faults to each other), is to think to myself that I will fulfil a task and by that earn ten minutes to watch cricket (in the USA the ball game), but then so easily that turns into twenty minutes. Surely we are not to be workaholics or work machines. Also, it is always a mistake to try to force upon others the gifts and capacities that we might have. Yet who would deny that we are softies today in the whole area of self-denial?

Another lesson is one which we might call a sensitive conscience with regard to holiness. Holiness is the fulfilment of all the moral law, the Ten Commandments, not merely legally, but with a loving disposition toward God Triune, our families, friends and neighbours. Unlike some who never answer letters (even when you write two or three times!), you could write to busy brother Houghton and you could be sure to receive a full and worthy reply within a week.

He did not like conferences. The raucous side was distasteful to him. The volume of session after session tended to give him a headache. Seclusion was preferred. Personal gifts differ so much. His were devoted to helping others make progress rather than multiplying books from his own pen. His *Sketches From Church History* admirably fills the need for new Christians who want to know about the history of the Church. In addition to the Banner work SMH edited the *Bible League Quarterly* from 1970 until April this year.

The Carey Family Conference Gloucester 1987

'How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!' Twenty-five churches were represented this year during a week to be remembered for excellent spiritual fellowship, edification, recreation and rest. Such was the enjoyment of some that they wrote afterward to say that it 'could have gone on forever!' This reminds us that one of the happinesses of the New Jerusalem will be that its joys will have no end.

It was agreed for the sake of efficient organization and lively leadership that Peter Parkinson should act as chairman throughout. This worked very well indeed, especially since he has the ability to keep everyone alert. One person at the helm is better than half-a-dozen. There was a significant change in the daily routine and it worked so well that it will doubtless be repeated. Each day began with a main session with the speaker given up to an hour. After that there was a choice of two general, and one young people's seminars, or rest if preferred. The seminars, consisting mostly of questions and discussion, were well received. For instance one was led by Andrew Symonds on the subject of the Christian in business. Alec Taylor of Chelmsley Wood, Birmingham, fielded the controversial subject of prophecy in one session, and the baptism of the Spirit and tongues in another. He used cassette recordings to illustrate the confusion and contradiction which is abroad today on these issues.

Peter and Wendy Back and family, missionaries from Mali, enriched the conference, not least when Peter led one seminar on the subject of missionary work in the Muslim world. Peter Parkinson spoke on social concern based on his experience of 'Caring for Life' which is described in this issue. Erroll Hulse led a seminar on the inter-dependence of the churches. This theme is to be opened up, particularly from the perspective of history, by David Kingdon at the Carey conference for ministers in January.

(continued from page 23)

Mr. Houghton's three sons are very successful in scientific careers. His wife Miriam died in 1974. In 1978 Mr. Houghton married the widow Elsie Ash (nee Shepherd) well known for her former work at London Bible College, and authoress of the book *Christian Hymn-writers.* Our sympathy is extended to her. Pastor Richard Chester led the funeral service at Abingdon, giving thanks for the gift of a life and career which has enriched the Church. It is appropriate that we should always give the praise to our heavenly Father, who in this instance was pleased to give two 'lives' of fulness and usefulness, with the second so surprising in its distinctiveness. From first to last it is all of grace. And sovereign grace was one of Mr. Houghton's cherished beliefs.

John Foxe 1517-1587

Foxe's life is described on pages 13 and 14. With regard to scrupulous attention to detail and hard work there is a likeness with Mr. S. M. Houghton see pages 22 and 23.

A memorable feature of the conference was the support given by Trinity Church, Gloucester, where Alec McDougall is pastor. It means much to parents when a full programme is provided for children of all age groups. Tim Symonds excelled in the organization of sporting activities during the afternoons. Those not enamoured by competitive activities greatly enjoyed the scenery provided in and around the historic and beautiful city of Gloucester.

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